

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2022

PRESENT: Councillor I Herdman (Chair)

Councillors G Bentley, C Brady, B Emery, E Fallows, A Hart, N Hawkins, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, L Page, D Price and J Salt

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors K J Jackson, N Yates, J Aberley, C Atkins, K Flunder, J Jones, J Porter, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst, R Ward and M Worthington

APOLOGIES: Councillors M Bowen, S Ellis, H Plimley, P Routledge, Z Routledge, P Wood, M Deaville and M Gledhill

17 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

There were none.

18 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

DECIDED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

19 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY. (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).**

No urgent items had been received.

20 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:-**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda item 10 – Proposals for the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme.	Cllr C. Atkins	Other – A Trustee of Rudyard Sailability Club which was due to receive grant funding.

21 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

Q1. Received from Councillor Gledhill *(Councillor Yates acted on behalf of Councillor Gledhill as he was unable to attend the meeting)*

“Can the Portfolio Holder give an update regarding the Tunstall Road, Biddulph site in the Local Plan? It was deemed potentially to be at high risk of not being delivered

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at a recent Resources meeting. In particular I am concerned about the impact of this eventuality on our five-year housing supply.”

All responses from Councillor Flunder – Portfolio Holder for Tourism:

The current position is that the scheme is in the SMDC 2020 adopted Local Plan and a Masterplan has been approved for a mix of Employment and 105 residential units. The site is in 6 different ownerships all of whom are willing sellers subject to price. The allocated area also includes 2 existing dwellings. The Cabinet has approved the Accelerated Housing Delivery Programme in February 2022 that identified the need to appoint consultants to advise on potential Council acquisition and land assembly/delivery mechanisms in 2022/23.

By way of supplementary questions, Councillor Yates highlighted the impact on the whole of the Moorlands should the five-year housing supply not be met, wondered whether alternative sites should be investigated and asked if any timescales were attached to bring the site forward. The Leader agreed to provide more detail in relation to the five-year housing supply, after the meeting and the Portfolio Holder explained, progress had been made with the study of the mills. Two officers had recently been appointed to provide assistance with regeneration projects and an update was expected shortly. A request was made for Councillor Yates to email the Portfolio Holder with his queries and he would then respond in relation to timescales.

Q2. Received from Councillor Hoptroff

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration please update the Panel on the Mill Strategy in Leek?”

Response:

The Council have commissioned a Property Demand Analysis for the redundant Mills in Leek with the aim of understanding the potential for development/regeneration of the Mills and how the Council may usefully assist the building owners to realise their potential. Further work is currently underway to extend the study to consider redundant mills in Biddulph.

In response to a supplementary question in relation to timescales and scope, the Portfolio Holder advised that a stage 1 draft report had been prepared which would be available shortly for comment by members.

Q3. Received from Councillor Yates

“Residents in Biddulph have raised concerns regarding the clearing of tree cover on the Wharf Road Local Plan Site, can the Portfolio Holder update the Panel on the delivery of this major mixed-use business and housing development site?”

Response:

There are currently access (Highways) and ownership issues that need resolving to enable delivery. It has been proposed that Highways Consultants and Land Assembly consultants are engaged to look at these issues. There is a yet to be determined planning application from Aldi that if approved would sterilize the access to the remainder of the land. The above issues therefore need resolving before substantive progress can be made.

The accuracy of the response was queried, particularly around the Aldi store and the specific reason the site was on hold. The Portfolio Holder would provide a response after the meeting.

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The importance of the site being delivered was emphasized and it was queried whether discussion had taken place with the business that may need to be relocated. In response to a request for a meeting to be held in Biddulph, the Portfolio would consider incorporating this with a meeting being arranged in relation to the Tourism Strategy.

Q4. Received from Councillor Hart

“Why is the Wharf Road Masterplan on hold?”

Response:

The Cabinet has approved the Accelerated Housing Delivery Programme in February 2022 that identified the need to appoint consultants to advise on potential Council acquisition and land assembly/delivery mechanisms in 2022/23.

It was suggested that the work achieved by the Regeneration Team had been impacted due to a recent departure of officers and that the current staffing level was inadequate. The figures were requested for the number of staff that had left the authority prior to May and from May to Sept 2022.

22 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The number of items that required a date allocated to them was noted. Discussion took place around the Management of Green Spaces, Mills Masterplan and Leek Market Operations. The Panel was assured it would be informed of the outcome of the Levelling Up Fund bids as soon as it was known.

DECIDED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

23 **SMDC REFRESHED SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY**

The Panel considered a report on the work completed to develop the Move More Staffordshire Moorlands Strategy in replacement of the current Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.

Move More Staffordshire Moorlands (attached at appendix A of the report), was a ten year strategy that collectively reimagined how we moved more every day. This strategy was an evolution of Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands (2017) and drew on experiences and learning from the intervening years, which included the exceptional circumstances during the coronavirus pandemic.

Once approved, the strategy would set the overall strategic direction for how the Council and partners focus resources. It was important for any new plan developed by the Council or partners aligned where possible to the agreed principles and priorities detailed in section 9.16 and 9.17 of the report. For example, Council related plans included: the Leisure Transformation Plan, Place based working plans, and the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP).

Overall members welcomed the report and various topics were discussed:

- Inadequate toilet facilities at Brough Park and the Leisure Centre given the new play area and well attended concerts. A suggestion was made for the Disabled Facilities Grant to be awarded for a Changing Place facility.

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- The Bowling Green maintenance schedule was requested as it was felt that this wasn't being followed. Productive meetings had taken place with the Bowling Club and the schedule had previously been shared with the Club.
- The budget for the delivery of projects/strategies and a reminder of ballpark figures was requested for inclusion in future reports.
- For future reports to include the equality impact assessment.
- The successful delivery model at Biddulph Bowling Club and the feasibility of this being adopted at Leek.

DECIDED:

The Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel **RECOMMENDED** Cabinet **APPROVED** the Move More Staffordshire Moorlands Strategy.

24 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

DECIDED:

That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

25 **PROPOSALS FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT PROGRAMME**

Members scrutinised a report on the proposals for the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

_____Chairman _____Date